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1962/10/23

INCOMING TELEGRAM

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Department of State

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Action

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FROM: Brussels

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 636, October 23, 1 p.m.

NIACT

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED by *MB* DATE *10/28/62*

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CUBA

As instructed, last night we informed Lefevre and Spaak orally (through Rothschild) of substance President's speech on Cuba, and I am seeing Spaak this afternoon at 3:30 to discuss it with him.

[On personal basis and in confidence Rothschild gave me his estimate of initial reaction Spaak and GOB along following lines:]

Following Finletter's presentation to NAC last evening, De Staercke (Belgian NAC representative) telephoned Spaak urgently, informing him of steps we were taking and evidence we had of construction offensive missile sites in Cuba. [While Spaak and Rothschild were both impressed by evidence we presented re aggressive Soviet missile build-up, news of our maritime quarantine of Cuba and other steps came as distinct shock to GOB, which has not as yet had opportunity to evaluate fully. their implications and effect in terms of cold war and maintenance of peace.

I gather Spaak has strong feelings that given gravity of these

-measures-

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-2- 636, October 23, 1 p.m. from Brussels

W Measures and their implications in terms of war and peace, we should have consulted with our NATO allies in advance rather than just informing them after the fact, and I believe Spaak will make this pitch strongly to me this afternoon. Rothschild himself concluded by saying that "what is done is done" and he believes we can count on sympathetic understanding of our problem by GOB *Je*

Spaak is attending Ministerial meeting this morning of Six Common Market countries and Rothschild informs me Cuba is first item on agenda. Given Spaak's very considerable influence with other European countries and in light of presence in Brussels of Ministerial representatives of the "Six", any additional appropriate information which Department can send me before 3:30 this afternoon Brussels time could be most helpful not only in terms of my meeting with Spaak, but in consideration of his position and influence with other European leaders. *Je* In particular, any appropriate comments on why we felt unable to consult more thoroughly with NATO would be appreciated, although I will, of course, stress that as they know, President has repeatedly and publicly made clear he would take appropriate action if there were evidence Cuba being transformed into base for aggressive and once our intelligence uncovered irrefutable evidence of very rapid Soviet build-up of offensive missile bases, it imperative that we move with utmost swiftness and vigor to quarantine Cuba, etc.

W I have also been in touch with Baron Kronacker (one of principle leaders of opposition) who frequently takes initiatives of his own. He had planned ask Spaak this morning to convene and appear before Foreign Affairs Committee of Parliament this afternoon to set out Belgian position on our action. Kronacker mentioned highly critical reaction on part of French that we had acted without consultation and, although very friendly and well-disposed to us, seemed to share this criticism. I told him I was seeing Spaak this afternoon, that I

personally-

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636 [personally believed it premature to convoke the Foreign Affairs Committees today, that if our Western allies gave the appearance of being in disarray and strongly opposed to our action, it could encourage the Soviets to react even more strongly, thus increasing the danger of tragic miscalculation by Soviets. In light these considerations, I asked Kronacker not to ask Spaak to convoke the Parliamentary Committees today but to wait at least until tomorrow. He agreed that it most important West not appear divided and that our allies not turn on us and said he would refrain from asking Spaak to address committees until tomorrow which would give me opportunity to go over situation fully with Spaak.]

MACARTHUR

DMB

NOTE: Advance copy S/SO 10/23.

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